

---

**Government of the District of Columbia**



**Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs**

Testimony of  
**Linda K. Argo**  
Director

***Bill 17-365***

***“Trash Collection Noise Violations Abatement Act of 2007”***

Council of the District of Columbia  
Committee on Public Works and the Environment  
Jim Graham, Chairperson

December 12, 2007

Room 412  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
2:00 pm

---

Good afternoon, Chairman Graham and Members of the Committee on Public Works and the Environment. My name is Linda Argo, and I'm the Director of the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA). With me is Don Masoero, the D.C. Chief Building Inspector. We're here today to testify on Bill 17-365, the "Trash Collection Noise Violations Abatement Act of 2007."

The District's noise regulations, DCMR 20, Chapters 27 and 28, expressly state that "Every person is entitled to ambient noise levels that are not detrimental to life, health, and enjoyment of his or her property." Illegal early morning trash collections are in direct conflict with this objective. Therefore, to assist D.C. residents in addressing these violations, DCRA has an established noise complaint intake process.

Currently, DC residents may call 442-4477 to register a residential noise complaint. The caller will be asked for specific information concerning the nature of their complaint and will be given a case number. This case number may be used for future follow-up inquiries related to the complaint.

It should be noted that while the complaint intake number is staffed during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., if more than three calls come in simultaneously, callers are directed to leave a voicemail message. They'll receive a call back within 24 hours or the next business day.

The intake operator will also arrange for the immediate scheduling of a residential noise inspection. The inspection will be scheduled to coincide with the timing to the alleged violation. For example, if the reported violation occurred on Tuesdays and Fridays at 5:30 a.m., the inspection will be scheduled to take place at 5:30 a.m. on the next regularly scheduled collection day. Our inspectors conduct these inspections without noise meters — what we're determining in these cases is whether the trash hauler is collecting trash during prohibited hours (9 pm – 7 am). If a trash collection vehicle is found to be conducting business during these hours, the violator is cited with a notice of infraction.

I want to point out that the procedures I just outlined apply to a noise complaint related to private refuse collectors, not the District's trash collectors. If residents have a concern related to public trash collection, they should contact the Mayor's Call Center at 727-1000 or complete a service request on-line at the Districts website - [dc.gov](http://dc.gov).

To enhance the ease by which citizens can register complaints and service requests at DCRA, we are currently developing on our website ([dcra.dc.gov](http://dcra.dc.gov)) the capacity to take service requests on-line and issue a tracking number. We anticipate that this option will be available by the end of January 2008.

As to Bill 17-365 itself, we make the following observations:

**1. Citizens can and already do file complaints with DCRA about trash collection noise violations.**

**2. The current regulations authorize:**

- MPD to issue criminal citations,**
- DCRA to impose civil infraction citations, and**
- Citizens to independently initiate civil actions.**

**Therefore, we believe that adequate authorities and mechanisms are in place to address these complaints and violations.**

**Councilmember Graham, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. This concludes my remarks. We're prepared to answer any questions you may have.**